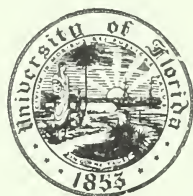


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REPORT
OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION

TO
GOVERNOR CHARLES B. AYCOCK,

1903-1905.

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REPORT
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HISTORICAL COMMISSION
TO
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To His Excellency, GOVERNOR CHARLES B. AYCOCK.

For the information of your Excellency, of the General Assembly, and of the public, we beg to submit a brief report of the work of the Historical Commission for the past two years and of the work outlined for the future.

The people of North Carolina are realizing more and more every day that it is not safe to trust the future to the control of a people who are ignorant of their past; and that no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great. But even when this lesson is fully realized it will be valueless unless steps are taken at the same time to preserve the material from which that past is to be made intelligible to the present and to the future. To accomplish this work the General Assembly of 1903, at the instance of the State Literary and Historical Association, created a commission of five members to be appointed by the Governor to collect, edit and publish valuable documents elucidating the history of the State. The sum of five hundred (\$500) dollars annually is appropriated by the act to cover the expenses of collecting and transcribing such documents, which are then to be issued by the State printer as public printing. On the 20th of November, 1903, a meeting was held in Warsaw and the commission was organized for work by the election

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of W. J. Peele as chairman and R. D. W. Connor as secretary.

Such work as the commission is to do if it be properly done will require great care and time. As yet, therefore, but little more than a good beginning has been made.. The commission has now in press its initial volume, which gives a review of the "Historical and Literary Activities in North Carolina" during the period from 1900 to 1905. The record produced here is one in which the State has good right to feel a pride and will appeal forcibly to the patriotism of all good citizens. It will be the policy of the commission to issue such a volume at the close of every five-year period, giving in each a summary and review of the historical and literary life of the period covered. The present volume, in addition to review of the historical and literary activities of the past five years, contains the report of the committee of the State Literary and Historical Association appointed to reply to the statements of Judge Christian of Virginia, regarding North Carolina's part in the War Between the States. This committee was assisted in its efforts by the Historical Commission which defrayed the expenses of two men to visit Appomatox battlefield to obtain necessary data for the report of the committee. Material for this volume was compiled and edited for the commission by W. J. Peele and Clarence H. Poe, secretary of the State Literary and Historical Association. Under the direction of Col. Fred A. Olds of Raleigh, the commission has had made and placed in the Hall of History in the State Museum, handsome photographs of DeBry's rare and valuable engravings illustrative of early Indian life in North Carolina. These pictures are the most nearly perfect illustrations of Indian life before the white man colonized the continent in existence, and can be utilized to great advantage by students of our early history. Arrangements have also been perfected for reprinting the narratives of

Barlowe, Lane and Hariot of the early discoveries and settlements on the North Carolina coast, and these reprints will be illustrated with the DeBry pictures. The value of these narratives in elucidating that period of our history is of course apparent to all, but on account of the extreme rareness and excessive price of such copies as are in existence, they are now practically inaccessible to all but a favored few. To multiply copies of these interesting works in inexpensive but attractive editions, we believe will stimulate a wide interest in the history of the first English settlements in America. In addition to this work the commission will soon issue a reprint of the "Proceedings and Debates of the Constitutional Convention of 1788," together with the "Journals of the Constitutional Convention of 1789." Original copies of these valuable debates and journals are so extremely rare and costly that it is the desire of the commission to issue a large edition of reprints in order to afford our people an opportunity of becoming familiar with this brilliant chapter in our history. The editorial work has been done for the commission by Prof. E. P. Moses of Raleigh. The manuscript is now ready for the printer. Finally, under the supervision of Dr. Dillard of Edenton, the commission has had copied and prepared for publication the parish records of St. Paul's church of Edenton, in which is found much valuable information of the early Albemarle settlements.

The reprinting of rare and valuable historical works is of great importance, but it is not the most important work for the commission to do. The real work lies in collecting, transcribing and editing original sources. The importance of this work is equalled only by the almost insuperable difficulties in the way. Many hundreds of invaluable historical documents and records have been lost or destroyed through the indifference of the State and the ignorance and carelessness of their possessors. These are hopelessly gone, but

many others remain which should be preserved. Stuffed away in dark corners and dusty archives, in pigeon-holes, vaults, desks and cellars, all over North Carolina, are many documents, records, private and public letters, and other manuscripts, which as matters now stand are of absolutely no value to their possessors or to the public; but if properly collected, edited and published they will be of incalculable value in throwing light on our history.

It is the duty of the Historical Commission to do this work. All patriotic citizens should aid in it. Those who possess such documents, or know of their whereabouts, will render a service to the State by placing them, or copies of them, in possession of the commission. All originals or certified copies of valuable documents, church and court records, manuscripts, letters, maps, old newspapers and portraits, or of any other material of historical value, should be placed at the disposal of the commission for the benefit of the public and a safe repository provided for their preservation. All material which cannot be parted with permanently, if loaned to the commission, will be returned after copies have been made; and provision will be made for copying such documents as their owners are unwilling to part with at all. All expenses connected with such work will be met by the commission. The material after being carefully edited will be published and due acknowledgment will be made to all who aid in this work. Those who have such material should not store it away as the miser does his gold.

The history of our State can never be fully and accurately written until this work is done. But it is a work that cannot be accomplished unless the commission meets with the earnest support of patriotic citizens who have the documents, or information of the documents, which are desired. It is a work which cannot be accomplished within a year, nor within two years, but is rather the work of a generation, and it is

earnestly to be hoped that no cessation will be permitted until it is all done and thoroughly done. Need one urge upon intelligent men the necessity for such work? So long as we neglect it we need not be surprised nor complain if the "scorner shall sneer at and the witling defame us."

Respectfully submitted,

W. J. PEELE, *Chairman.*

R. D. W. CONNOR, *Secretary.*

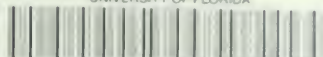
J. D. HUFHAM,

F. A. SONDELEY,

RICHARD DILLARD,

Commission.

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